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JESUS OUR MASTER.

THE particular thing we propose for our present discussion, is the feeling which starts at this word Master, when it is applied to Jesus. If we mistake not, there is a feeling more or less prevalent, causing this word to have an unpleasant, or at least a questionable sound. Many, we apprehend, who are unconscious of any unbelief in the Savior's teaching, might be inclined to soften its meaning, or partially explain it away. It suggests the idea of *authority*,—an idea which the mind of the present time is particularly slow to admit, either in what pertains to the present world, or to the eternal principles of spiritual truth. The language of the quaint old poet scarcely sounds gratefully in many ears, when he says,

“How sweetly doth My Master sound! My Master!
How these words yield a sweet content,
An oriental fragrantcy: My Master!”

A different spirit prevailed when that song was sung. In truth, those declarations of implicit spiritual reliance in which the religious feeling of a former time delighted to pour itself out, in its speech, or in its song; could scarcely now have had their birth. For the conviction of spiritual dependence,—the well whence they flowed, is not now, as then, the ruling feeling of the hour. And we only need to peruse the devout books

of a former age, we think, and observe the spontaneous expressions of a simple, childlike reverence that are gushing out over all their pages, to realize how great the change in this respect, in the heart of the world. That fervent and lowly piety would be strangely startled by the tones of these comparatively unreverential days.

The religious world seems distracted by precisely opposite tendencies. In some quarters there is a revival of *superstitious* reverence. Yet it cannot be doubted, that one of our chief temptations is to an extreme and vain self-trust. A revolution in human thought, most beneficent in itself, delivering from bondage to *man's* authority, has brought such an extreme jealousy of our freedom, as an incidental result, that we almost forget the lowliness becoming our fallibility. When it has been said we cannot receive the systems men are urging, unless they seem true to our souls, there has been a tendency to go on and say, We cannot receive the word of Jesus himself, unless it be thus witnessed within. Jesus is no more the Judge, to whom we refer our questionings for decision—whose simple word we accept as unquestionable truth although we do not yet *see* its truthfulness. The practical tendency, we fear, is to bring him before *ourselves* for judgment. We have heard so much of the greatness of the soul, we are tempted to feel nothing else can be *so* great. The sun of righteousness doth not shine with any brighter beams. Unconsciously doubtless, oftentimes, but really, we may thus take the superior place, and question or reject what seems dark or untrue to us, with little hesitation of feeling. The protest of our own thought *is* good, against the whole world of erring men. For all we are brethren. But when we are tempted to try the peerless One, in the extreme of theory, or the practical tendency of feeling, the Redeemer's word comes warningly to our memory, "One is your Master, even Christ."

Now it may be impossible to state this tendency, precisely as it exists and acts in any single heart. But we are sure we do not err respecting its actual existence, and general operation. And we meet it in all its forms, by directly asserting the

unspeakable importance of clinging to *something* as a spiritual authority, to whose tribunal we may reverently bow. We take this precise word authority, almost odious as it is—we take it as covering a thought essential in our judgment to be remembered, a thought, too, which no word beside can adequately express.

One discrimination must be made at the beginning. The precise discussion is not upon *what grounds* we should take Jesus as a spiritual authority. We are not asking which in the bright train of witnesses is most convincing in his testimony. One man may think he assumes the position we have indicated solely on account of the miracles. Another may affirm himself to assume it entirely independently of them. He may say, "What I know of Jesus is so absolutely divine, that I am sure what I do *not* know is equally glorious. And I bow to him therefore as the unclouded light of the world." We have little disposition to contend, when men do not attain this result by the same process with ourselves. It is only the settled, unwavering conclusion we deem most essential. And we say, first, one of the first things we learn, is our *need* of such a spiritual authority. Instead of gaining any absolute reliance upon the intuitions of our own moral feeling, almost the first thing we learn is that they are not to be thus trusted. Only one supposition could warrant that reliance. It is the supposition that no trace of moral weakness, no shade of sin remains, to darken or mislead us—that we are all that most believers suppose Jesus to be. The simple statement proves no man can do aught, except to prostrate himself in overwhelming convictions of his fallibility. We need something whereby we may revise our uncertain judgments. We not only need a tribunal to which we can appeal against the judgments of erring men all around us, but a higher Court than they, or ourselves, to which we can appeal against the misleadings of our own thought. Ah! there is an unspeakable difference between the statement, that man may see the truth as a *learner* in the school of Jesus, having it all witnessed it may be, beam after beam, as the life of the living vine flows into his being, and any feel-

ing which *seems* even to question the Master's authority, or in any way to take our own thoughts as a law unto ourselves. We need something to save us from ourselves. The voice of God within me alone does not suffice. Doubtless that is always speaking. But I cannot surely tell whether my conclusion be this voice of God, or the vain persuasion of my own understanding. I may practically confound it with suggestions of my own passions even, as experience shows. What I term conscience, may be only the flashing of a human indignation. The whispers of the Spirit come with no peculiar sign, to say that these, and nothing beside in the heart, descended straight from heaven. Where is the unerring SIGN? We want a voice of God without ourselves, whereby we may try the spirit within us, to see whether it be indeed of God, or only some blinded and tempting impulse born of error or sin.

These necessities are not the mere fancies of a theory. They appear in awful distinctness to the trembling heart, whenever the intense conviction of its fallibility comes. When distracted by doubtful speculations respecting truth, when something we once deemed a firm support seems to slide beneath our feet, when sinking, like the apostle in the treacherous wave, have you never felt the want of something to which you could look for aid to bear you up? Have you never felt the need of some hand to be stretched out to save,—a hand whose guidance could not mislead,—a hand, into which you could implicitly put your own, more trustingly than the child can ever follow where parental love would direct its way? We do not understand the philosophy which fails to recognise this as our first necessity. It seems to us to pass by one of the deepest experiences of the human soul. It may be a philosophy for angelic existences. It is not the philosophy for *human* nature. We understand not the philosophy which fails to end all its teachings by deeper convictions of our own imperfectness,—convictions causing us to trust less what our own minds seem to say, and to turn more devoutly in the search for help in our own incompetency of judgment. We do not understand the philosophy that fails to bring us directly to the great Physician

with the constant prayer that we may be healed of our blindness.

And when we once leave this comparatively abstract statement of the position, to recur to the lesson taught in every step of human progress, the truth, already so plain, seems to blaze out before our view with an unspeakable clearness. If any one principle be stated in the word of Jesus it is this,—That the conclusions of the imperfect or perverted heart may not be trusted. It may call darkness, light, and light, darkness. And if any fact be attested in the whole history of his religion, it is the sad and immutable fulfilment of the Savior's declaration. Ah! why was the Cross, at first,—that central light of the Christian system, to which the penitent look with streaming eyes, and the fearful with bounding hope, at whose foot every burden oppressing human hearts forever falls,—why was that only foolishness, to the men of that day? Why was it, that from this divinest hour of the Redeemer's history, there came no beauty to ravish their souls, and no call of love to melt them into penitence? And why has the world ever since, rejected in one age as folly, what in the next perhaps was welcomed as a darling revelation of the Love of God? And why at the present hour, when they hear that exposition of the command to return blessing for injury, which forbids *all* violent resistance,—why do all wiser souls hesitate to speak too confidently of a doctrine, which so utterly contradicts what the world terms the plain impulses of reason, and the clear teaching of experience? Possibly it is only our spiritual blindness which causes the extremest statement of that principle to appear to any man an absurdity. Who may dare to say it is not thus? Did we feel the love of Jesus, who can say the difficulties we now imagine might not instantly vanish away, and the rejected doctrine shine out as infinitely wise, as well as altogether lovely? If Jesus clearly teach that thought, I bow to his authority, though I see it not clearly yet. Ah! there is only one answer to these and all kindred questions. They show in one unbroken succession of testimonies the imperative need of some spiritual authority to rectify the wanderings of human thought.

They show too, in equal clearness, how Jesus has stood before the world, purifying its judgments, drawing men ever upward into a fellowship with his mind and heart. And this necessity of an external appeal, we say in conclusion, was no transient want. It remains while earthly or unholy desires remain to mislead. Selfishness and passion and pride, to-day as of old, change the light in us into darkness. And ever is it said in the call of Jesus to the world he would enlighten, "One is your Master, even Christ."

We hear much sometimes of the necessity of *self-reliance* as the spring of greatness in character. Man must cast himself fearlessly upon his own convictions, and follow them out bravely in his life, unswayed by the influence of other souls. There is truth in much that is thus affirmed. But it may beget a self-exaltation whose result is ruinous. The great names in the history of the Christian faith did stand up bravely against all the world could say. But they stood up against men, because they leaned upon the Lord. The apostles overcame, because of the individual strength they gained by submission of mind and heart unto the Master. There is a nobler word than self-trust to be used, when we ask the way most directly leading us to all which is great and glorious. It is faith,—faith which throws self-trust aside, in confiding reliance upon the one common and only Master. We understand what Jesus means when he affirms, "Without me, ye can do nothing." I cannot trust myself until I have been enlightened by the "Light of the world." I must possess his mind before I may be sure the conclusions of my own thought, or the suggestions of my own feeling, are not corrupted by in-dwelling selfishness or sin. And therefore I throw my self-trust aside. I go to him for judgment continually. He declares what my reason *ought* to say. And therefore I listen to the word spoken in Galilee and Judea, at Olivet and Calvary, for my single guidance. The more literally we come in the humility of a child, the more surely shall we be exalted. Not self-trust, but lowly faith, makes men most divine. Faith, humbly leaning on the breast of the Lord, is the glorious power which has filled believing hearts with glorious measures of his life and

love. Thus has the human mind been opened to those grand truths into which the angels yet desire to look, and thoughts almost divine have found a home in mortal breasts. Thus has the human heart been endowed with divine energy to subdue sin, and work righteousness. It is faith,—a faith whose essence was a trust in something out of themselves,—the spirit which said ‘Master’ most devoutly,—that has won to men the nearest resemblance to the Master. And this is not bondage. This is freedom. “If the truth make you free, then shall you be free indeed.” Through faith we live. We grieve to find the word faith anywhere forgotten, and any poor thought of *self-reliance* assuming its holy place. We should grieve to find the word Master, understood as we have used it, ever becoming distasteful to any hearts. It would be a mistake in our speculations, we think, of no trifling magnitude. And to us, as to the disciples of other days, it would be needful then to say, “Whosoever shall not humble himself as a little child, shall not enter into the kingdom.”

We need a light without ourselves whereby we may verify and judge the light within ourselves. But some may say, When you affirm Jesus to be the appointed Judge, you do not surely escape the difficulty. Does not the same Jesus become to each man greatly a different teacher, through the varying interpretations different minds place upon his words? Do we not practically hear our own thought oftentimes, rather than his word, when we listen to his teaching? Doubtless it is true. Perhaps nothing can entirely preclude this error. Some shadow from ourselves may always fall upon that glorious truth. But the more this is urged, the more we feel the need of some such appeal. If a teaching so divinely clear, where all is declared even to babes, may be perverted by our perverted thought, in what bewildering mazes of error should we be, without that blessed word! Man may misunderstand the chart to guide him over the sea, though every rock and reef threatening danger in his voyage be laid down therein. But what could he do without some such chart in his hand to direct his way? We cannot but hope for the gradual disappearance of human errors, when we all go alike to one standard of

judgment, in simple lowliness. Slowly yet surely, its clear light shall be revealed to human hearts, until there shall be one Shepherd and one fold. We fear it will be a sad wandering among the mountains when we fail to hear and follow the Shepherd's voice.

We can only take our departure, in our speculations, from the position of the fallibility of man. We have heard much of the greatness of the human soul. It is needful to chasten the feelings that thought might awaken by remembering its limitations also. Only one attitude in truth becomes us—the attitude of profoundest reverence, through remembrance of the weakness of our present infancy. We are always to be looking upward, upon the bended knee. We see no other path to the greatness of which men speak. We long to find some unerring truth whither we may ever turn, whose revelations we may hope at length to apprehend, and in whose light we may truly see. We cannot rest upon any word of man. The assurance we seek cannot be there. We cannot call any *man* master. We are all brethren. We cling to the life of the common Lord, permitting no word of man to come between our souls and himself. We need this element of humble faith to temper the bold speculations wherein we oft engage. It would be a real sign of progress, we think, to restore the old feeling which exclaimed continually, "My Master," and delighted in the holy confidence and sweet content it expressed. It is not indeed any real blessing to admit any word of truth, barely because Jesus uttered it, while we do not ourselves even begin to *feel* its truth. That is the empty cry, "Lord, Lord." Yet it is good, and needful, we think, to say, 'Truth is there, though we do not see it yet,' and to cast away whatever seems to contradict aught Jesus appears to say. For that position of heart in itself becomes a dawning of the revelation. And to such a relying spirit, the Savior's mind shall gradually be unfolded. Jesus will call us friends, as he called his first disciples friends, making known to our believing hearts whatsoever the Father hath declared. And in our bright experience we shall receive the twofold blessing,—to see the truth, and to feel its power.

THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN.

(Suggested by a Sermon from the above text.)

ON earth no Sabbath day !
 Silence in all the temples of our God !
 Their hallowed courts no more by mortals trod,
 For needed strength to pray—
 No prostrate soul before their altars sighing !
 The heart of flesh upon itself relying !

Oh, who of earthly mould,
 Bearing a human soul within his breast,
 Can say he needs no aid from Sabbath rest,
 Its pages to unfold ?
 Who that looks o'er this heaving human ocean
 Would steal a single aid from man's devotion ?

A God-appointed day !
 It stays the mighty flood of human care.
 Remove this barrier, and the waters bear
 Our storm-tossed barks away.
 A glimpse of heaven, the mists of earth dividing,
 To win us to the world those mists are hiding !

On the broad stream of life
 The Sabbath like a quiet haven lies,
 Where the frail vessel may obtain supplies
 And strength, for coming strife :
 And breezes, from the land their barks are nearing,
 Refresh the mariners 'mid dangers steering.

How cheering is the light
 That beams o'er earth from every Sabbath morn !
 The sailor, o'er the waste of waters borne,
 Blesses the welcome sight,
 Rememb'ring him of childhood's Sabbath teaching,—
 A brief regret his careless spirit reaching.

Thanks for earth's holiest day,—
 Her sacred aisles by thousand footsteps trod :
 The golden chains that bind our souls to God
 Lead from those courts away.
 The temples of the Lord awake thanksgiving !
 Within them man is won to holier living.

If all of outward form
 Were banish'd from this dwelling-place of ours,
 Should we, untaught, our teachers find in flowers,
 The sunshine and the storm ?
 When, led to look through Nature into Heaven,
 The key to all her cyphers has been given,

Then we indeed may read
 Lore more convincing than by sages taught ;
 The 'broidered blossom waken loftier thought
 Than man's confining creed,
 And heavenly rays illuminate the pages
 Of Nature's book, with light for future ages.

Pray that the Sabbath sun
 Pour its calm radiance o'er the land and sea,
 Till all of earth to Christ shall bow the knee,
 And God's whole will be done ;
 Till men of every kindred, tongue and nation,
 Have listened to the tidings of Salvation.

M. H. S.

A MEMORY OF THREE SISTERS.

Who that has lived long in this world, who that has seen and felt only a few of its cares and bitter experiences, can doubt for one moment, if he thinks at all, that only by feeling our dependence upon a High and sustaining Power, only by being *religious*, can we find peace and comfort ? Who does not soon learn that "in the world there is tribulation," and that only through him who has "overcome the world," is there rest for the sinking soul ? Let any one look about him, and see the various trials which even the happiest are called upon to undergo,—here a wasting sickness, there a terrible bereavement, nights of care endured by one, and days of anxious toil by another, thousands on whom it would seem as if the sun of joy never shone, whose lives appear to be utterly obscured by

the clouds of sorrow and misery. Would not one sicken and grow faint, even if quite removed from any experience of pain and trouble, to look upon such misery and see no pitying Eye, and feel no watchful Presence, in the midst of earth's sorrows? When the heart grows sad and heavy, and the body is weary unto death, then comes the longing for Heavenly aid and the leaning upon the strong arm of One who is ready to save. Sad is it, then, if his presence has not already been sought, even while joy and gladness shone around. Should not each young heart seek Him in the freshness of the life He has given and so watchfully guarded? before one touch of care has shaded the brow, or one anxious fear sent sadness to the heart and told the joyous being that life is not all sunshine? Yet rarely until such an experience comes, do the young understand and feel the lessons which careful and loving hearts have sought to impress upon them. Life looks so bright in the beginning, there is so much to be enjoyed, and the thoughts are so full of plans of happiness, that many in the carelessness of youth think it *cannot be true* that life has so much depth and significance. It seems to them the tale of peevish and fretful spirits, that only through trial are we made perfect; and they look forward to old age as the time to prepare for that other life which seems so distant and mysterious.

But many and blessed are the revelations made at the bed-sides of the young who have been called to suffer much, and to lay down their lives while the world looked brightest; and it were well if each youthful heart would treasure up those teachings, and look upon them as the "footsteps of angels" leading the way to Heaven. Such a lesson was taught me; and so deep was the impression that even now, after the lapse of many years, it seems as fresh as ever.

There came to our village, in the beginning of summer, three young girls. They were sisters; and their appearance interested every one, for it was evident that two of them had come to die among us. Their simple story was generally known. They had lost their mother while very young; her place had never been supplied to them; and thus they had

grown up without any one to watch over their opening minds, to teach or to love them. Their father had been obliged to be much away from them, to work for their support; and he had not the faculty, though he might have had the will, to make up in part the loss of a mother. He had sent them to schools in various places, and had tried to have them well educated; and now that the pale cheeks and heavy eyes of the two eldest too plainly told that the disease of the mother was preying upon the children, he had sent them to our healthy little village, vainly hoping a change of air might revive them. They were quite young; the eldest was but eighteen. She was seen occasionally at church with her young sister, but the second one was already too ill to leave her room.

Our good minister shared in the general interest which their appearance excited, and on their expressing a strong desire to converse with him, he called to see them one Sabbath afternoon, after the quiet services of the sanctuary were over. He found the sisters together, one upon her sick bed. Her illness was talked of, and it was evident that her death was felt to be inevitable, but it was alluded to with composure even by the sick one herself, and the conversation was general for some time. At length Anna, the dying girl, said in her weak voice, "I should like to speak with you alone, Mr. C—." When the sisters had retired, she burst into an agony of tears, and when at length she could speak, she told the kind old man her sorrow. She knew that she must die, she said, and yet that life was very pleasant to her; that there were many ties to bind her to earth, that when she saw the young full of health and animation she wished very much to live; but that this thought was not half so bitter, as the feeling that she had lived without God in the world. She felt she was not prepared for another life, for she had never been taught to pray, or to feel God's presence, and she knew nothing about religion; and now on her dying bed she felt a want which was terrible to bear, and which was the harder because those around her in health and strength could not sympathize with her. Her distress was very trying to witness, but the good man knew the

human heart, and had seen many in trouble, and he gently bade her be comforted, and soothed her with the loving words of the Savior. And when, after praying with her, he took his leave, he left her peaceful and calm. Before many days she was called away from her suffering.

The sisters received this bereavement with quiet resignation. There were no loud demonstrations of grief, but a gentle and deep sorrow. The elder grew rapidly worse, and was soon unable to take her accustomed walks in the village. The clergyman visited her often, read to her, and conversed with her. He found her a remarkable girl. She freely opened her heart to him, and told him her regrets and her anxieties. She felt much and bitterly, as her sister died, that she had not earlier been brought to the feet of Jesus ; and she wished before she died to comply with the loving request, " This do in remembrance of me," making this offering of herself to the Lord. She said she felt now how much more beautiful it was to consecrate the soul in youth to such high and holy duties, before the pleasures of the world had been tried, found unsatisfactory and fleeting, and the soul forced, by bitter disappointment and trial, to look upward for comfort.

She always appeared serene and peaceful. She knew she must die, and she looked forward to the grave with no shrinking. Her life had been an innocent one ; she had but few sins to reproach herself with, but she felt now that even sickness was a blessed thing for her, since it had brought her to the knowledge of her Heavenly Father. She had bidden adieu to all earthly pursuits and attachments, and now the thoughts which drew her to earth were all connected with others dear to her.

Her young sister was devoted to her, listening to the prayers and kind instructions of the good minister, and treasuring up every word which came from her sister's lips. They had always lived apart until now, and she felt that it was a blessed thing to be permitted to watch over her sister's sick bed. Each day she grew more womanly, though there was about her a touching simplicity which won all hearts. One sorrow the sisters shared together ; and the eldest, with her

larger knowledge of the world's temptations, felt it most deeply. It was the wilfulness of a dear brother. He had turned recklessly away from holy things, and was seeking, in vain she knew it must be, for happiness and joy in the sinful pleasures which a city could afford. Often did this dying sister talk of him to her kind friend, and earnestly did she beseech him to pray with her, that he might be spared the terrible retribution that must inevitably come upon him if he went on. "Perhaps," said she, one day, "he may receive some solemn impression at my funeral ; it may be that thus my early death will awaken his better self. I shall not then have died in vain." Thus with thoughts of those she loved, and prayers for their happiness, her life ebbed away. Each day she grew weaker in body, but the spirit was bright and steadfast to the last. She knew when death was near, for she had been anxiously waiting for a release from the worn out body ; and she was glad to be laid by the side of her sister, in a quiet corner of that country churchyard.

The poor little Mary, the last of the three, was indeed desolate. She had been through so many trials, bitter to so young a spirit, that her soul was schooled in affliction and in endurance. Even this last sad trial found her calm. Many felt and expressed a deep interest in the poor lonely child, and she had many kind offers of assistance. But the spirit of childhood seemed to have been checked, and she felt lonely and bereaved. She had but just awakened to a new life. Only within a few short months had the light of religion gleamed upon her mind, and it was still faint and flickering. She sought eagerly for more knowledge from her sister's kind friend, and freely told him her troubles. She could not feel God's presence, she said. It seemed to her that the thought of her sister would keep her from doing anything very wrong, but she could not feel God's power in her soul. Once she came to him and begged to know if she could not do something to reclaim her lost brother ; and when he bade her pray for him and wait, hoping for some favorable change, she looked up with her eyes full of tears and told him that she had never prayed ; that she did not know

how. But the light grew brighter, and the revelations which had come to her from those sick beds were kept ever clear before her. She had gained the love of all in the village by her sweet and gentle manners and the fortitude with which she had received her many trials, and when, in a few months, she was removed by her father to a distant place, more than one in the village felt that they had parted from a dear friend.

Years have passed, and we have only heard, at intervals, that she has fitted herself to be a teacher, and is highly respected and loved by all in the home she has found. But those graves, side by side, often recall to me the sleepers beneath, and the sweet and gentle Mary. And if in the midst of the young and light-hearted I hear any of the gay ones making light of religion, and putting off to old age the preparation that cannot begin too early, I tell them the story of those orphan sisters. I bid them remember that there are times when the excitement of pleasure will not avail; that when the glitter is over, all is emptiness unless the heart has learned that God is near, and has bent before Him in meekness and humility.

"Earth will forsake :—oh ! happy to have given
Th' unbroken heart's first fragrance unto Heaven."

S.

THE ARTIST OF THE BENEVOLENT.

THE beautiful deeds of the poet, the painter, the sculptor and the musician, have found their praises upon the lips of the graceful and eloquent, and been embalmed in the memory of the ages. The artist of the poem, the picture, the statue or the opera, finds, wherever he wanders, sympathizing souls; everywhere, in this crowded world, are there men who have emotions and senses, to which those divine arts strongly appeal. But there is an art heaven-born, yet attainable by every mortal being, which is as yet but dimly seen, and feebly appreciated by the world of mankind. It is the art of benevolence, whose

instrument of labor is a loving spirit, and the delicate material upon which it traces its lines of light, the imperishable soul of the sinful and lowly.

To this divine work was the young Agnes devoted, with all the ardor and intensity of the amateur artist of the ideal. It became the chosen occupation of her privileged life. As in the solitude and luxury of her splendid home she read of the daily walks of the Sisters of Charity, or of the family of the Christian Gregorys, and in imagination wandered along the banks of the Euxine, into the deep forests of ancient Pontus, and visited that abode of holy women, under the spiritual guidance of the mother and sister of the three bishops, where the raptures of meditation, prayer, and morning and evening melody, were mingled with the active duties of charity and the sweet interchange of friendship and society; as she followed the steps of Saint Catherine Adorna, from her quiet home in the beautiful Genoa, to the hospital of the sick and dying,—her heart burned within her, and she saw the beauty of a life consecrated to acts of benevolence. It was true that within the circle of her own acquaintance, as well as upon the record of history, there were examples of Christian love and duty; but there, as everywhere, the humble offices of “going about doing good,” were too often taken up as the last resort, when all other excitement failed, by the lonely, the disappointed, or the advanced in years. When they could no longer attract or flatter the world, they threw themselves into the arms of the deserted poor. But to the pure sight of Agnes Grey, in all her richness of youth, accomplishments and beauty, the ministrations of comfort and bounty to the sons and daughters of sorrow and want, were more precious than all the gilded allurements of the passing world.

When I first knew her, she had been an orphan for several years, in possession of a beautiful estate, on the banks of a broad river, which flowed through one of the most favored cities of our Union. With the wealthiest and most intelligent families of this city she was united by the ties of kindred and friendship; and to the inhabitants of its outskirts she was

bound by the ties of warmest charity. Around and within the houses of the first were gathered, by the hand of fortune and fame, the luxuries and elegancies of every clime; within the abode of the latter were scarcely the rudest necessities of the most stinted life. As she passed through the dark lanes, along which the latter were crowded, into the broad arena of cultivated society, her heart sank within her at the contemplation of the sad contrast, and she determined to do what she could to remove the dark shades of the one, and thus speed the time when there would be a mingling and perfect balance of good and evil in the elements of society. It was in the spirit of this resolve that she applied herself to the study of the eminent in Christian charity of all ages; and from the study, and the contemplation of the Great Exemplar, she became imbued with a like spirit; and, thus prepared, she went about doing good.

It was while she was in the midst of executing her benevolent design that I was invited to spend the summer at her delightful home, and was there a witness of her deeds of love.

The day of my arrival at the home of my young friend, as we were seated in her spacious parlor, a messenger was announced; and a feeble child appeared at the door, saying, "Miss Grey, mother is failing fast and wants to see you." The whole expression of the little speaker bore marks of suffering and destitution. Though her clothes were decent, there was an absence of the freedom and light-heartedness of the child of comfort and education.

"I will come, tell your mother, Sarah"—and the child left us. Soon Agnes and I followed her to the house of the dying mother. On our way, I observed, "How very sad that little girl looked!" and asked, "Is it from the sight of her mother's sufferings?"

"No, not altogether," said Agnes, "for impressions, however painful, soon fade away from the mind of so young a child. But upon the spirit of the poor and degraded and benighted, there has fallen a veil which only can be lifted by the power of God in Christ. We often hear it said, even by the benevolent, 'Well, childhood cannot be robbed of its ease and

happiness, even amid the abodes of want and wretchedness. But we sadly mistake. The ills of poverty and infamy are not confined to those who are responsible for them, but the sins of the parents are visited upon the third and fourth generation. Every child, born of wicked parents, enters this world under a dark cloud; and unless some hand of love go to its relief, it must grope its way painfully through life, and at length stumble upon the dark mountains, and be lost in night. This is sad indeed, but nevertheless true. And how can it be otherwise? 'Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?'"

As these words died away upon the beautiful lips of Agnes, we entered the low, dark room, where lay the young mother, whose life was fast ebbing away. Her eyes brightened as her friend took her raised hand, gently stroked her polished forehead, and bending over her, whispered in her closing ear words of love and comfort. Upon a table by her bedside were the little luxuries of the season, which Agnes had sent in the morning to tempt her appetite, and at their side a bouquet of the most beautiful flowers, whose fragrance filled the room. As Agnes sat upon the bed, the sufferer pointed to an Eolian harp, which lay upon a chair, and whispered in the faintest tone, "Sing;" and Agnes placed the instrument at the window, and while the air of heaven breathed through its chords, she sang in a low strain the words,

"Bring music! stir the brooding air
With an ethereal breath!
Bring sounds my struggling soul to bear
Up from the couch of death!

In vain my soul its life would pour
On the faint music here;
The voices of the spirit shore
Even now are in my ear."

And ere the tender voice of Agnes had ceased, the spirit of the sufferer had been wafted to the shores of the spirit-land, and the low notes of the harp sighed a requiem over the dead!

Upon inquiry I learned that the departed, having wandered

far away from the fold of the Great Shepherd and become an outcast from home and from the bosom of friendship and pity, was found by Agnes in one of the lowest haunts of infamy, and through her ministrations of love, restored to herself and penitence and the hope of Heaven.

Every morning, for a week after this event, I observed a pale, singularly looking boy walking slowly up the avenue which led to the house, with his book under his arm, and his head hung dejectedly down. So unusual were his appearance and manner, that I asked Agnes who that child was ; and she answered, that it was Lewis, an object of the deepest interest to her ; " for he has been deprived of the power of thought and enjoyment by the wickedness of his own mother. He is an only child of very intemperate parents, and during the tender years of childhood they fed him with a portion of their daily draughts of intoxicating liquor, until the boy gradually passed from health and activity into a diseased and enfeebled state of body and mind. This increased as the years passed, until the cold, blue skin grew wrinkled over the soft bones of his body, and the brain was fast being consumed by the fiery liquid dealt out to him by the hand of a mother ! In this condition I found him one warm summer day, seated in a small room from which every breath of the air of heaven was shut out, and the haggard mother and the imbecile boy sat listlessly stretching their attenuated limbs toward the window for the sunshine to warm them. The boy was dressed in woollen clothes, with a tippet closely tied round his neck ; his hair hung in thick, matted locks on his face ; but neither the mid-day summer sun, the close air, the winter garments, or the entrance of a stranger, gave the slightest glow to his pallid, lifeless face. During the first half hour of my visit, the child sat with his eyes cast down, and I felt that this was a hopeless case ; it appeared that the mind with the body was shrunk into a mere shell. But in the attempt to become acquainted with the mother, who seemed wilfully set against committing herself upon any subject, I saw on the window-seat a small plant, which like its owners was faded and yellowed, and deprived of

his warm, vigorous life by improper treatment. I asked the name of the plant, and the boy instantly raised his eyes, and as a faint, sickly smile passed over his face, hurriedly said, " 'Tis a rose, and 'tis mine, and it's going to bloom ;" and before he had finished the sentence his whole frame trembled like a dry leaf as the autumn winds sweep past it. I drew near to him and took his thin hand, and asked him if he would like to have another plant to keep that company. " Yes," he answered, with a start, withdrawing his hand from mine ; and his mother said, " Lewis is afraid of everybody." I staid with them until the excessive heat and impure air of the room made me faint and sick, and after repeating the question several times, " Would you like I should call again," without any response, as I was closing the door, the child looked up in his mother's face, and she then said, " If you want to."

" And I did want to go to that injured boy. Often, by day and night, during the week which passed before I again saw him, would his pale face visit me, and my heart yearned with the tenderest pity toward him. In my next call I introduced myself by carrying a green, thrifty, budding rose-bush ; and the mother, who was alone at the moment of my entrance, almost smiled upon me, or rather upon the gift I had brought her child, for she loved him, brutally though she had dealt with him. In a moment, Lewis came forward and looked at the plant, and then at me, trembled as when I first saw him, and an expression of suffering crossed his face ; his eyes glistened with tears, but they were not full enough to overflow the lids. I was rejoiced to find that the fountain was there, though its waters were low and sluggish. I tried to comfort the poor child and drew his attention to the plant, and he listened with an understanding ear, methought, to the few words I said about it. His mother seemed less like the rock of adamant than during my first visit, and even said, " He would listen all day, if you would tell him about flowers." After a few more interviews I found that the mind and sympathies of this boy seemed shut against every living thing, save the tender plant. He was afraid of everything else. From his fellow-creatures

he shrunk and hid himself, as the sensitive plant quickly folds its leaves at the touch of man. He was eleven years old, but had never attended school, or played with boys. He had passed the long days and nights of his existence in the rooms occupied as his home. I asked him one day, what he intended to do when he grew up to be a man. He replied, "I'm going to be a traveller." Such was the effect upon his mind of the dreadful treatment he had received from his parents. It had thrown him into a kind of delirium tremens, without the violence, but with much of the fear and suffering, of common cases. And in this condition he shunned the companionship of boys, and looked forward to the hour when he might become a wanderer far from the haunts of men. From that time, my object has been to draw him gently into the world, and subject him by degrees to the influence of his fellow-creatures. But it was a very difficult task, and I have several times despaired of accomplishing it. At length I was able, by the promise of flowers, to lure him to my house, and since then for the same object he has been very frequently, and for the last week has met a class of boys in my room who are learning to read. But I ascribe everything in his improving condition to the influence of God's beautiful work, the flower of the field. As, to Silvio Pellico, in his dungeon-darkness and solitude, the little green plant brought light and refreshment, so to the bound and benighted mind of this boy, there was left one source of joy in the form of the flower. And enfolded within the leaves and flower of the natural plant, if ever here below, will be found the angel of comfort and strength to this child of misfortune. And as I watch him day after day, gazing with intense interest upon the bouquet which I hand him as he enters my room, I can almost see the change, which, through this influence, will be wrought upon his mind. Love, inspiration, hope, cometh not alone through the voice and pen of man. Nature is most eloquent; even the stones of the field may cry out; and there is music everywhere. And though the mind of man may be closed up to all other exercises, it still may be able to 'consider the lilies how they grow.' "

And thus closed the summer to us,—the lovely Agnes in the daily pursuit, and I, as the witness, of her beautiful deeds of benevolence.

“But do promise me,” said she, as I was bidding her adieu, “that you will come and partake of our Christmas feast.”

And as Christmas drew near, I received the summons, and felt it a privilege to be able to meet it. From the days of her childhood, this season had been made sacred and joyful to Agnes, by its holy associations and merry feasts. And since she had learned to remember the poor, she desired to draw them too into the great company of those who, with prayer, feasting and jubilee, proclaim, “Unto us is born this day a Savior who is Christ the Lord.” And so she invited all, young and old, who loved the day, and desired to keep it holy, to meet at her house and partake of a Christmas feast. Unlike the banquet to which ten of the most miserable persons that could be found were yearly bidden by the last testament of a melancholy old man, “to provide that the stern or fierce expression of human discontent should not be drowned even for that one holy and joyful day amid the acclamations of festal gratitude which all Christendom sends up”;—unlike *this* was the design of the gentle Agnes. It was to gather the miserable, but that they might drown their misery in the angel song of gratitude, “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men.” And as the object for which Agnes called these lowly ones together was different, so were the arrangements and decorations of the table. The banquet hall of the story was “illuminated by torches, hung round with curtains of deep and dusky purple, and adorned with branches of cypress and wreaths of artificial flowers, in imitation of such as used to be strewed over the dead. A sprig of parsley was laid by every plate. The main reservoir of wine was a sepulchral urn of silver, whence the liquor was distributed around the table in small vases, accurately copied from those that held the tears of ancient mourners. Neither had the stewards forgotten the fantasy of the old Egyptians, who seated a skeleton at every festive board, and mocked their own merriment with the im-

perturbable grin a death's head,—such a fearful guest, shrouded in a black mantle, sat now at the head of the table." But the hall which the Christian Agnes had prepared presented a different aspect. It was lighted and warmed by God's sunlight, and its walls hung with the lovely images of departed saints; and in place of the death-head of ancient superstition and fear, rested the image of the beautiful Christ-child, offering the crown of imperishable riches to all who would strive after it. Nor were the guests which surrounded this table taken out of that dark train of unbelievers, misanthropes, murderers, misers and scoffers, whence came the ten miserable men of the story. So that this feast was not as that, when dark forebodings, anger, discontent and profanity uttered themselves; but it was rather a gathering of those humble ones who asked that they might sit at the feet of Jesus and make this a feast of love.

A.

SEPTEMBER EVENING.

AROUND this lofty old elm-tree,
 The twining dance of twilight hours
 Hath left a spell, which comes to me
 Like fragrance from a wreath of flowers.

The wind is like the breath of fairies
 Hidden among those locust-trees;
 And as their song or laughter varies,
 So plays the soft bewildering breeze.

The lone complaining whippoorwill
 Breaks silence that seemed charmed till now;
 The evening world had grown so still,
 With gazing upon Cynthia's brow.

Mars shakes his bloody, brazen spear
 O'er yonder wood in th' eastern sky,
 As if beleaguered Troy were near,
 And Helen's lover turned to fly.

For Venus Hebe brims a cup
Of nectar, in the western blue ;
And now the earth is drinking up
The swept off bubbles,—fall'n in dew.

And pale blue Lyra overhead,
Abashed before Diana's beams,
Smiles like a violet half-dead,
While still of melody she dreams.

Over the fields, a mile away,
The village church against the hill,
White as a spirit, seems to say,
With lifted finger, "Peace ! Be still !"

Peace to the worn and weary heart !
Peace to the tried and tempted soul !
No longer tears of trouble start :
Passions are under calm control.

But night, with all her blessed beauty,
Flies quickly the pursuing dawn ;
And soon tomorrow's sterner duty
Forgets the gentle presence gone.

R. P. R.

A SERMON OF NATURE.

BY REV. A. B. MUZZEY.

MATTHEW vi. 28, 29. Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin ; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

THE more we study the spirit, and investigate the actions and speech of our Savior, the more new and interesting traits we discover. One peculiarity in his character is illustrated in the passage before us. We look upon him usually as a plain, practical person, one who regarded not the ornaments of art or the embellishments of nature, but who considered the utility of every object around him, and who valued nothing except it had solid and palpable advantages. But behold our error ; Jesus, the Redeemer of the world, full of care, and oppressed,

one would think, with toil, takes notice of the flowers by the wayside. So unprofitable a thing, as some would say, as a "lily of the field," this exalted personage deigns to observe and point out to his followers.

Nor does he give this production merely a passing look and word, shewing that its gay hues have by force arrested his attention. He comments upon it in language that manifests an habitual regard for the works of creation and a deep love of nature. "I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Jesus, we here perceive, had examined the lilies of the field minutely, and in the spirit of a lover of their charms. For he compares the monarch of the East, not to a brilliant cluster of these flowers, but to a single specimen, and says the king could not rival "one of these." There stood the lily in the glancing and intense light of an eastern sun, its broad petals surpassing the most perfect of human productions, in their exquisite beauty circling round the extremity of the stem, its disk bending downward and surmounted by tufts of luxuriant leaves; a flower fitly denominated in the language of science, the "Crown Imperial."

The Crown Imperial; what a glory must have gathered round that lily. How must it have impressed the mind of the Savior, when he could say that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like unto this. Picture to yourself the splendor of that monarch's appearance, and then mark the force of the comparison. When arrayed "in all his glory," he was seated on his throne. His robes of state are of the finest linen, bleached to a snowy whiteness. On his brow rests the royal diadem studded with pearls and irradiated with the gold of Ophir. A chain adorns his neck, and bracelets clasp his arms, all of the same bright metal. He is seated on a throne of pure ivory, overlaid with the best of gold, and having a footstool of solid gold. In his hand is a sceptre, the ensign of his greatness and power, and that too is gilded with gold. And yet in this dazzling spectacle there is nothing so truly beautiful, nothing so magnificent as in a single lily of the field, in that divinely fashioned Crown Imperial.

There are many occasions on which we are led, as Jesus here was, to institute a comparison between the works of God and the productions of man. When we contemplate the earth in the beauty of Spring, we are impressed with the tokens of a Presiding and Infinite Power that operates in all we see. The fields, at his bidding, have laid aside the sombre apparel of winter and peer forth in vernal gladness. The birds carol in sweet ascriptions of praise, the air is fragrant with a thousand odors, and never have we so felt the inspiring influences of that "greater light" which God hath set in the firmament.

Spring melts gradually into Summer. We seem now in a world of dreams. The atmosphere is teeming, as it were, with the creations of fancy. Fields and skies and waters, all above and beneath us, are peopled with life and vigor. Nature is instinct with the breathings of one joyous sentiment. In every tuneful grove, on the heaven-piercing mount, or along the peaceful vale, on the steadfast land, or the rolling seas, we witness everywhere proofs of a matchless wisdom and an inexhaustible love. What with the serene influences above and the bland breezes around, and the enamelled earth at our feet, the scene surpasses indeed the "glory of Solomon."

But never are we so sensible of the presence and unapproachable superiority of the God of nature, as when Autumn comes, laden with its myriad gifts of all that can please the eye or gratify the palate. Now does the Creator who has clothed the grass of the field in a more than princely robe, let the preceding seasons and months have testified as they might to His goodness to man, outvie even Himself. The trees bend beneath those rich ornaments which He alone can bring forth on their boughs. No blushing tint of man's device can rival the colors He blends on the fruits of autumn. The painter may dip his pencil again and again, and yet he cannot attain the perfection of nature's hues. The goldsmith does not plate with such exquisite beauty. The sculptor cannot carve those graceful forms and delicate lines, and with that divine symmetry which marks the labors of the great artist. No skill can fashion an instrument whose music shall excel the sublime notes of the distant ocean. No symphony can equal that which

sounds from the choir of the forest. The wind instruments of God, who can match them? And what strings so delicate and harmonious, yet ever varying in their strains, as the company of cloud-reaching pines daily exhibit? What instruments of culture can man fashion like those two divine cultivators, heat and moisture? Where is the silken web so fine and of so exquisite a gloss as God weaves in the fields that lie all around us? No tapestry is like that which is hung before and above us each morning and each evening that passes. In vain shall we think to surpass the velvet softness with which the flowers are invested. We can invent no luxuries so tempting to the appetite as the divine Inventor brings each year from the bosom of the unperverted earth.

But let me not seem to disparage the productions of man. He was made in the image of God; and we may never array the Creator in opposition to the creature. If we look aright on the proofs and products of human skill, we shall find rather in them a call, not to condemnation, but to reverence their origin, and lead our thoughts upward. Man is wont, I know, to ascribe all his wonderful works to his own wisdom and his own power. "Do not I," is his language, "cause my gardens to yield all they do? Is it not my hand that raises from the soil flower and fruit?" "To whom but myself should I ascribe," says the artist, "this curious machine, my own invention?" Is it so, then? Who was thy Maker? Whence didst thou derive thy genius to plan, and whence the cunning of thy hand to execute? The inspiration of the Almighty gave thee thine understanding. It was He who imparted the genius of invention, who gave man this wondrous intellect, in which all plans are generated, and where every curious device must lie distinct and perfect, before the hand can embody it into shape.

Nor is this all. God created at first the models of each piece of man's skilful workmanship. We wander through the galleries of the Vatican and admire the immortal works of Michael Angelo, Raphael, Titian, and their illustrious compeers, but whence came the type of the artist? From the faces and forms of nature. Whence came the model of the architect? From the Gothic fir-tree, the Doric oak, the

Cosinthean acanthus, and the Tuscan spars of some deep cavern. Where did sculpture find its primitive model? In the God-fashioned form of man. To what great master did the primitive painter repair to learn his art? To Him, who calls forth the fundamental colors of the cloud and the plant. Who was earth's first engraver? Ask for the hand that carved the mountains, and engraved the majestic rocks with lines of power and skill. Did not God spread the first table for man? Behold his beautiful cabinet-work on the river-side and by each graceful hill. Where learned man to fashion his apparel but of Him who provides bird and beast with their nicely-fitted dresses? No steam power can surpass His, who heaves the whole earth by his tremendous volcanic agencies. The carpenter may frame and cover buildings with his utmost skill, and yet it was God who first built all things and thus taught him his trade. What weavers so ingenious as nature's? See the great carpet beneath your feet; mark the web of the spider; consider how the wren wove, at the dawn of creation, her perfect nest. The mariner took his first model from that unobtrusive little sailor, the nautilus. And the printer can never invent type that shall rival God's great stereotype plates. By these "the heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge; their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." Do not then arrogate all merit and all praise to thyself, O man! Remember the Donor above. Then wilt thou be humble, for then the truth will be on thy lips and in thy heart.

We may learn from the remarks of Jesus on the lilies of the field, to value the instructions of nature. There are many who conceive that all religion is wrapt up in the sacred volume. Our Savior venerated the Scriptures of his nation, and referred often to them in his discourses. But how often did he also illustrate his doctrine from the works of nature. He likens himself to the vine. He points to the fig-tree. The olives and the fields white to the harvest, all conveyed to his pious spirit some holy instruction. He never despised what God had clothed

with a glory. On the contrary he sought in the humblest flower some divine lesson.

It is then a duty of the Christian to open his heart daily to the impressions of nature. The beauty of her works should never pass unnoticed and unfelt. We should cultivate a sympathy with all that is grateful to the senses. God has not gifted these flowers, toward which man too often turns but an idle gaze, with their brilliant dress, their thousand intermingling tints, and their rich and manifold odors, to be lost on our souls. Let us love them for the sake of their Original. They are replete with religious instruction; let it not be wasted on our minds and hearts.

Let us love the productions of nature for their own sake. Many think nothing valuable which does not bring a clear increase in silver and gold. God did not build this fair universe for such. He never designed the infinite variety and beauty of vegetation to be all piled up on the altar of Mammon. No. He implanted within us a sense, as of moral and spiritual, so of outward beauty. And we wrong our own nature, we stifle or stint one of the richest and one of the purest sources of enjoyment when we so harden our minds as to look on no beautiful flower and no delicious fruit without inquiring what price it bears in the market. A love of these things for themselves, a taste for the beauty of nature, is what Jesus possessed and what every pure mind should often turn to amid the din of this work-day and money-getting world, and may repose upon as an unfailing gratification.

But not only does a love of nature gratify the senses and please the taste, but it is a most effectual means of purifying the heart. I do not believe a sincere and devoted admirer of her works can be a very vicious man. It has been often remarked that those who spend their lives in the various departments of Natural History, are distinguished for their purity of manners, kindness of spirit, and genuine piety. Who can study and love these sinless productions of a sinless Being and not feel a glow of affection for their Author? The songs of the feathered tribes are full of innocent joy. He whose heart

has been attuned to the melody of nature cannot be essentially corrupt. Every jarring note must cease from his soul. He will be brought into that blessed harmony within, which pervades the universe around him. His motives, while he is in the world, will retain something of that divine purity which breathes from every part of creation.

The spirit we recommend will serve to calm our passions amid scenes where there is much to excite and disturb us. When Jesus had been thronged by the multitude and wearied by their demands upon him, he would launch out into the quiet waters of the Tiberias, or repair to the tranquil Mount of Olives, and how soon was he soothed; how quickly prepared to resume his toils. Let us imitate his example. If we have become agitated by looking too long on the face of man, let us walk forth and gaze on the face of nature. In every trial, and under every disappointment and sorrow, she will minister consolation to our hearts. Her language always is, "‘Son, be of good cheer.’ ‘Daughter, weep not.’ Under every burden learn of me lessons of composure and submission."

Let us contemplate the works of God with sentiments of piety. The world was made for this end. Not to afford means for wealth alone, not to reflect empty applause on our ear, not to pamper a diseased appetite has the Giver of all good provided these countless gifts. It is to draw our hearts upward to Himself. If we forget this—if we neglect so to use these bounties, we violate the pure spirit that was in Jesus, and we are guilty before Heaven. Father, forgive us that we have looked so often on thy wonders around us with a vacant eye or in a selfish temper. Help us to love all that thou hast created and pronounced to be good. Let the flower of the field preach to us sermons of purity and of prayer; and let the fruits of Autumn reiterate those teachings.

"As o'er thy work the seasons roll,
And soothe, with change of bliss, the soul,
Oh never may their smiling train
Pass o'er the human sense in vain!
But oft as on their charms we gaze,
Attune the wondering soul to praise."

INTELLIGENCE.

ORDINATION AT BURLINGTON, VT.—Rev. Oliver W. B. Peabody of Boston, having been called to become Pastor of the First Congregational Society in Burlington, Vt., was ordained August 14, 1845. The introductory and concluding portions of the public services of the occasion were conducted by Rev. Mr. Thompson of Salem, and Rev. Mr. Turner. The Sermon was by Rev. Dr. Peabody of Springfield, brother of the candidate; Ordaining Prayer, by Rev. Dr. Frothingham of Boston; Charge, by Rev. Dr. Walker of Cambridge; Right Hand of Fellowship, by Rev. Mr. Cordon of Montreal; Address to the Society, by Rev. Mr. Gray of Boston.

The preacher's text was from 2 Timothy iii. 17: "That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The main purpose of the discourse was to set forth the doctrine that the production and establishment of a complete character is the real design and end of Christianity. The idea conveyed by the term *character* is a strictly Christian idea. The ancient heathen languages had no word answering to this. They had none of so comprehensive, so profound a meaning. The Gospel inculcates, not single virtues, not sentiments in detail, not specific rules, but the formation of character, which includes all these. And he who gives an *example* of this vast attainment in his own life, is the true Christian disciple, the real Christian teacher. This leading thought was presented under various aspects, amplified and illustrated, and brought to bear with peculiar fitness and force upon the passing occasion.

INSTALLATION AT NASHUA, N. H.—On Wednesday, September 17, 1845, Rev. S. G. Bulfinch, recently of Washington, D. C., was installed as Pastor of the Unitarian Church and Society in Nashua. The services were as follows:—Introductory Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Babbidge of Pepperell; Reading of the Scriptures, by Rev. Mr. Cutler of Peterborough, N. H.; Sermon, by Rev. Dr. Putnam of Roxbury; Prayer of Installation, by Rev. Mr. Miles of Lowell; Charge, by Rev. Dr. Gannett of Boston; Right Hand of Fellowship, by Rev. Mr. Peabody of New Bedford; Address to the People, by Rev. Mr. Osgood of Providence, R. I.; Concluding Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Morse of Tyngsborough.

The preacher's text was from Matthew xi. 28: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Human minds have always been perplexed by deep and solemn questions. The world seeks rest. Rest is a precious boon to it, and especially

rest from doubt, from intellectual uncertainty, from those haunting problems that, by an inexorable necessity, forever beset the human soul, and will not let it alone. Some of these questions pertain strictly to the intellectual kingdom ; relate to the origin and laws of this visible world, the mutual relation and interaction of the great organic forces of the universe. But profounder ones concern man's moral nature ; spring up from his meditations on the moral government of God, on the origin and meaning of suffering and sin, on the soul's future destiny. Philosophers and sages, schoolmen and men of science, have revolved these anxiously, and left them open still. Nothing is settled, nothing finally answered and established in them from age to age. Every generation renews them afresh, and lays them down unsatisfied. Pythagoras and Plato, Kant and Hegel, Reid and Brown cannot close them up. Nay more, the common mind owes to them a large proportion of its miseries, its bitterness, its sinkings into despair, and its gloomy fallings from virtue. To this discontented world, then, Christ speaks his words of heavenly promise, peace, hope and rest—"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden." He does not argue with dialectic skill ; he does not come down to the noisy arena of debate ; but he simply announces and prophesies the truth. With a look and tone and port all stamped and suffused with a divine authority and commission, he called the weary world to himself, and bade it be at peace. How sure his promise was, and how satisfying to those hearts he spoke to, let the whole multitude of the faithful, wise and simple, lowly and high, who have tasted of his consolation, and sought shelter in his faith, bear everlasting witness. The discourse closed with an exhibition of the power of Christ and his truth to give that rest for which the spirit longs and sighs, to every mortal condition, to every experience, to every age ; and commended the new ministry to be a ministry inspiring faith in Christ, trust, submission and peace.

The occasion closed with a collation spread for ladies and gentlemen, of a very delightful character, and distinguished by excellent feeling and excellent speeches.

DEDICATION AT SOMERVILLE, MASS.—The town of Somerville is what was formerly the northern and agricultural part of Charlestown. It was incorporated as a distinct municipality, we think, in 1842. In the spring of 1844, a congregation was gathered, and the Lord's day was hallowed by appropriate devotions, instructions and counsels. The religious interests of the people were under the care of

Rev. R. M. Hodges. Through the smiles of Providence, the exertions of themselves, and the munificence of friends, their wishes have been gratified in the erection and consecration of a commodious and beautiful house of public worship. This house occupies an elevated site in the territorial limits of the town. The services of consecration were performed on Wednesday, September 3, 1845, in the following order:—Introductory Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Stetson of Medford; Reading of Scriptures, by Rev. Mr. Newell of Cambridge; Dedictory Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Hodges of Cambridge; Sermon, by Rev. Mr. Ellis of Charlestown; Concluding Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Gray of Boston.

The subject of Mr. Ellis's discourse was, "The Reason, the Assurance, and the Use of Worship": the text was from 1 Kings viii. 27: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded." The completion of a new house of worship, standing on so conspicuous a site, made it a landmark over a wide extent of country, and a memorial of another world to those for whom it was to be a place for religious meetings. We were led to ask, what was the use of the structure, for what good purpose which admitted of being definitely and forcibly stated, was it designed? The question involves the whole subject of worship. Man seeks communion with God, man sets apart a place where God may be addressed and adored, where human hearts may be visited and strengthened by heavenly influences, and where life may be sanctified. When we ask, as in the text, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth?" we have the same question before us. The answer to it must come from ourselves. In the use of our own powers, which are gifts and emanations from God, we must find some way of assuring ourselves that there may be communion between ourselves and the Divine Being. We shall find helps towards that assurance in some spontaneous convictions of our own breast, in the living pages of human experience, and in the practical uses and necessities of life.

The preacher then considered the sentiments on which worship depends for its suggestion, for its life, and for its exercise, as the first head of discourse. The second leading thought presented by the question in the text, embraced the historical facts with which our Christian worship is connected. Under this head the preacher enlarged upon Christianity, as a revelation, because it presented us with a pure and perfect method of worship, in showing us God manifested in Christ, and in making worship to consist in spiritual homage, and in living obedience offered to a Spirit.

The third head of discourse concerned the practical uses to man of thus recognizing his relation to God, and seeking communion wi

Him. These were set forth under some general and specific statements, and were summed up by a reference to the extensive and crowded view of scenery and of human life which the hill where the church edifice stands commands. This scenery and the public institutions around and in sight are strikingly adapted to illustrating the uses of religion to man. The edifice stands upon the site of a Revolutionary fortification; it is surrounded by a vast and compact circle of flourishing and busy settlements, the scenes of duty, of happiness and of trial; and gathered around its base, are many public institutions—the State prison, the Navy Yard, the McLean Asylum for the Insane, Harvard University, Mount Auburn, &c.—all suggesting some high and holy purpose of religion. The preacher closed by setting apart the edifice to its sacred uses.

May the joys and hopes of the occasion, founded as they were on an enlightened faith and a true and diffusive charity, be to this people the sure pledges of future blessings from the exhaustless Fountain of life, light and happiness.

DEDICATION AT POMFRET, VT.—The new Unitarian meeting-house in Pomfret, Vt., was dedicated on September 11, 1845. The following was the order of services:—Introductory Prayer, by Elder Hazen of Woodstock; Reading of Scripture, by Rev. Mr. Streeter of Woodstock; Prayer of Dedication, by Rev. Mr. Willis of Walpole, N. H.; Sermon, by Rev. A. A. Livermore of Keene, N. H.; Address to the People, by Rev. Mr. Willis; Concluding Prayer, by Elder Kidder of Woodstock; Benediction, by Rev. Mr. Daggett of Woodstock.

The discourse was preached from Genesis xxviii. 17, "And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." and 1 Timothy ii. 5, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." The first part consisted of a statement of what the dedication of every Christian sanctuary implied, and the second of the particular faith to which a Unitarian house of worship is consecrated. This was enumerated under the topics of the Unity of God, his Paternal character, and thence Human Brotherhood; Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners; Mode of Salvation through Christ; the Holy Spirit of God; the Nature and Condition of Man in this life; and the Immortality of the spirit, and a State of Righteous Retribution hereafter. The discourse concluded with appealing for the truth and for the spread of Unitarian doctrines to the Holy Scriptures, and to conscience, reason, affection, and aspiration in man; to the spirit of Protestantism, of our free institutions, and of our age; and finally to the Almighty Father, and the ever-living Savior of men. If

these doctrines are not the veritable truths of Revelation, they will and ought to go down. But if they are, they will live, and not die; they will finally surmount all obstacles, and gain the heart of Christendom and of the world.

We rejoice in the establishment of this new church and society in the hill country of Vermont, on the mountains of freedom. May our brethren there, surrounded by different sects, receive our warmest sympathies and prayers. May they be built up in the most holy faith of the Gospel unto everlasting life.

DEDICATION AT BOSTON, MASS.—The large and beautifully finished House of worship in Hanover Street, Boston, built by the Proprietors of the Second Church, and standing on the same ground occupied by its predecessor for a hundred and fifty years, was dedicated on Wednesday, September 17, 1845. The services were as follows:—Introductory Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Robbins of Chelsea; Selections from the Bible, by Rev. Dr. Pierce of Brookline; Hymn, written for the occasion by Rev. Dr. Frothingham; Prayer of Dedication, by Rev. Dr. Parkman of Boston; Chant of Dedication; Sermon, by Rev. Mr. Robbins, Pastor of the Second Church; Hymn, written for the occasion by John Thornton, Esq.; Concluding Prayer, by Rev. Mr. Barrett of Boston; Benediction, by the Pastor.

The text was taken from John ii. 16: "Our Father's House" After expressing devout gratitude for the Providence that had brought this sacred work to its completion, suffering no harm to touch the brave and patient workmen that had laid its foundations, lifted its arches and compacted its massive masonry, the preacher adverted particularly to the appropriateness of this designation for a Christian sanctuary—"Our Father's House." He would regard it as the best of all inscriptions for a hallowed edifice. The associations and sentiments growing out of the name, and clustering around the words of Christ, were then touched upon and brought distinctly to view. A vindication was offered of our religion against the charge that it makes no appeal to our sense of the majestic and the beautiful. Our faith is a spiritual faith, and its spirituality constitutes its chief characteristic. But it encourages its disciples to clothe their offerings of devotion in graceful forms. An enlightened interpretation was given of the true significance of Christ's language at the well of Samaria. Christ's own reverence for sacred places and religious institutions, formed indeed a prominent theme of the discourse. The peculiar propriety of consecrating this spot was then alluded to,—a spot set forever apart from men's ordinary uses by the ministrations and prayers of a succession

of sainted prophets. Furthermore, Christianity, as well as the spirit of the old Hebrew institutions and Scriptures, sanctions, not only the culture of that element in the human soul which consecrates places and seasons, but also the adorning and beautifying of our temples. It is plainly the dictate of devout minds to make the elegancies and commodities of houses of worship to keep pace and correspond with those of their own residence and secular employment. Witness the noble zeal of David for the honor of the ark's resting-place. In conclusion, this sanctuary was solemnly dedicated to God the Father, to his Son, the Savior, to the Spirit of Human Brotherhood, and to all the sublime purposes, and exalted services, and affecting consolations, which the Gospel ordains and which the Christian faith inspires.

The sermon made reference to local memories and historical incidents quite in harmony with the elevated tone of thought which distinguished this whole interesting and impressive occasion.

FOREIGN.

ANNUAL MEETING OF UNITARIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS.—On Tuesday, July 29, 1845, the Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Sunday School Teachers' Tract Society for Birmingham, and the neighborhood, was held in the large room of the Old Meeting Sunday Schools, at eight o'clock in the evening. In the absence of the president, the Rev. Hugh Hutton, who was from Birmingham on the occasion of the opening of an Unitarian Chapel at Jersey, Mr. William Earl was called to the chair. After the reports of the committee and treasurer, which showed a great increase in the number of subscribers and the tracts that had been distributed during the year, Mr. Matthias Green, by appointment of the committee, delivered the annual address. It is impossible to convey a due estimate of this address. The lucid and forcible view that was taken in it, of the Gospel being an opening of truth in the mind, and that it must and will of necessity build up an intellectual condition, and establish the dominion of love, which it teaches, must have made a deep impression on the numerous audience, who, it was evident, were interested in an extraordinary degree, as the principles of their faith were so encouragingly set before them. It is seldom that truth, and therein righteousness—the intellectual, and consequently the sure structures of society,—with so much success are illustrated.—The meeting was subsequently addressed by Messrs. Edward Bridge, Samuel Brown, J. Redfern, John Lloyd, James Gittins, William Lowe, Charles Lloyd, Matthias Green, Edwin Greenway, and John Green, and the Rev. Edmund Kell.—*Inquirer*.